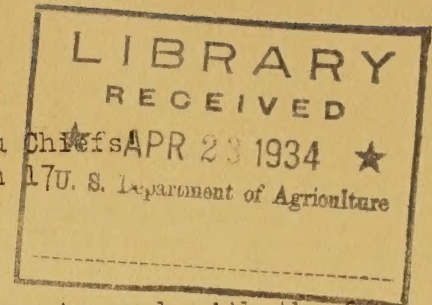


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Statement by J. T. Jardine at the Bureau Chiefs
Conference, 11 A.M., Saturday, March 17



The inter-bureau Committee appointed by the Secretary to work with the Office of Information and the Extension Service on a back-to-pasture-and-forage program had two principal questions put to it by Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Fleming:

First, what can the Department do immediately in an emergency campaign of education, concentrated within a period of five to six weeks, to get as much contracted and other acreage as possible into grass or, where the regulations permit, into forage?

Second, what is the possibility of a rather widespread long-time educational effort to change our agriculture in many areas from intensive to extensive?

Before the Committee was formed, considerable information on this subject had gone out to farmers. For several years the Bureau of Animal Industry has been pointing out that there are many sound reasons why a grassland economy would benefit the livestock industry. The Bureau of Dairy Industry has shown that under certain conditions dairymen get greater net returns from a given acreage if they use a system of roughage or limited grain feeding rather than one of intensive grain feeding. The Bureau of Plant Industry through the Replacement Crops Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has supplied information on the use of some 40 million acres taken out of cultivation, and in many instances has urged that these acres go into pastures and meadows.

A pasture handbook, dealing with the production and utilization phases of pastures, is now in the hands of the printer and will shortly be ready for distribution. Many of the States are urging farmers to increase their pastures at the expense of cultivated crops.

To determine what should be done in the emergency and long-time educational programs, the Committee has thus far considered mainly these three questions:

- (1) Will it pay the nation to go back to grass?
- (2) Will it pay the individual farmer to go back to grass?
- (3) If so, to what extent?

Some lively discussion developed at the first meeting. The initial approach was that the educational campaign should be based upon the assumption that the livestock or dairy farmer would make greater net returns from pasture and roughage feeding than he would from grain feeding. Some question was raised as to the general application of this assumption on the ground that the largest single saving made by the individual farmer of limited acreage in changing from intensive to extensive farming is in his own labor, a saving which does not result in a greater net return. Furthermore, the size of the individual farm enterprise may not be such that the farmer can profitably expand his pasture, unless he also increases the size of his farm. In fact, the result may be a net loss to a farmer during the year a pasture is established. I am going to leave to Doctor Holmes, the further

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of President of the United States, from the year 1789 to the present time.

1789-1797 George Washington
1797-1801 John Adams
1801-1809 Thomas Jefferson

1809-1817 James Madison
1817-1825 James Monroe

1825-1837 Andrew Jackson
1837-1845 Martin Van Buren
1845-1849 Zachary Taylor
1849-1853 Millard Fillmore
1853-1857 Fremont
1857-1861 James Buchanan
1861-1865 Abraham Lincoln
1865-1869 Andrew Johnson
1869-1877 Ulysses S. Grant
1877-1881 Rutherford B. Hayes
1881-1885 James A. Garfield
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discussion of the problem as it affects the individual farmer.

At the second meeting, the Committee arrived at an approach to which all subscribed. Roughly, it is this:

(1) Wider use of pastures and meadows in our farming system will reduce the production of cash crops, slow up production of animal products per animal unit, conserve the fertility of the soil, diminish soil erosion, and for agriculture as a whole, should produce increased net returns.

(2) Substituting pasture for cultivated crops obviously reduces the corn, wheat, cotton, and tobacco surpluses. Yet it does not necessarily increase the surplus of livestock products. Pasturage is consumed, of course, entirely by animals, while cultivated crops are also used for human food and textiles. Even at present, however, about 70 percent of our cultivated acreage produces feed for animals. Each cultivated acre produces considerably more animal subsistence than does an average acre of pasture. Shifting from crops to pasture land, therefore, reduces the production of feed for animals. Further, animals maintained on rations in which the concentrates are limited, will usually not produce as great a quantity of milk or meat per animal unit in a given time as will animals fed at the usual full feed rate of concentrates. The production of animal products will, therefore, be slowed up in the relative proportion to which roughage feeds are substituted for the concentrates in the ration.

Everyone knows that pastures conserve the fertility of the soil.

As a preventive of soil erosion, a grass cover is second only to forest cover. Certain lands planted to cotton or corn lose annually, on a 7 to 10 percent slope, from 14 to 17 tons per acre. Similar lands in Bermuda grass, blue grass, or lespedeza, lose only from .04 to .9 tons of soil per acre annually. When it is necessary to reduce production, it should be done by means that do not squander productivity.

On the individual farm, many questions affect the practicability of shifting from cultivated crops to pasture or roughage. The Committee must, therefore, study State work in this field and dovetail its efforts with those of the States.

Finally, American pastures, compared with those of other countries, are of low productivity. They must be made more productive eventually to justify an extensive shift from crop lands to pasture.

These conclusions, to which everyone I think subscribed, gave the Committee the basis on which to decide what could be done on the emergency basis, and on the long-time basis.

The seed situation is perhaps the controlling factor in the emergency effort. There is available enough seed to plant no more than four million acres to pastures

and meadows above the normal plantings, not including alfalfa and sweet clover. There is perhaps enough seed of alfalfa and sweet clover to seed 1-1/2 million acres. If we take into account stocks probably held on farms, and the fact that first seedlings can be spread out rather thinly, particularly on contracted acreage which cannot in any case be used this year, it's possible that we could get six million acres above normal put into pastures and meadows.

The entire seed supply may be used without much additional effort on the part of the Department. The efforts already made to get as many of the contracted acres into pastures, plus the fact that farmers will naturally prefer, if they can afford it, to make some use of the contracted acres, rather than to leave them exposed to the forces of winds, erosion, and weeds, are about sufficient no doubt to get the present supply of seeds used.

Seed prices are advancing. They are still below a normal price, but they are going up step by step.

The Committee has therefore recommended to the Office of Information that it shape its emergency educational program, which is already under way, in such a way as not to emphasize opportunities for immediate planting beyond that justified by the seed situation. It has also recommended that the long-time educational effort go ahead at once along these general lines:

(1) Show that for agriculture as a whole a change from intensive to more extensive farming is desirable.

(2) Show that it is not necessarily efficient for the individual farmer to strive for the last pound of milk from the cow, or the last pound of beef from a steer, or the last ounce of grain from the soil; this may appear as an about-face on much that has been taught in the past. However, it is merely placing greater emphasis on the fact that there is a point at which the law of diminishing returns begins to operate.

(3) By concrete examples, show that farmers in given regions are now shifting to pasture and forage, and why they are doing this.

(4) Induce farmers to save seed supplies during the coming season for the establishment of pastures next spring.

(5) Correlate all efforts with the States; in other words, all radio programs - except those on the network - and most press releases should be released exclusively through the State Extension editors for regional adaptation.

Now, as I say, the educational campaign is already under way. The effort is to cover not only the economic aspects of the change in our farming system, but also to break down the whole subject into proper sub-topics on the economic, production, and utilization phases; thus by keeping the subject constantly before farmers we hope to induce each to give thought to his own farm enterprise and to get in touch with his State Extension Service.

The Secretary opened a series of network broadcasts last week. Doctor Holmes continued the series this week. Mr. Sheets, Mr. Graves, and others will participate in future broadcasts.

Doctor Holmes and Doctor Baker are considering the practicability of putting out a brief bulletin on the economic phases of the shift to more extensive farming, to supplement the pasture handbook which contains principally facts on production and utilization.

Many press releases and syndicate programs - which are broadcast by approximately 300 stations each day - have already gone out. As time goes on these systematized programs and articles for the press will deal with such subjects as:

- Grass as a low cost crop.
- Grass in the farm rotation.
- Cost of establishing pastures and meadows.
- The economy of grass in meat production.
- Grass with some grain produces economical beef of good quality.
- How to use more grass and forage crops in swine production.
- How to use more grass and forage in sheep production.
- The use of roughage in milk production.

And so on --- And, of course, most of these topics will have to be broken up according to regions and types of farming.

The ones I have mentioned are only preliminary topics, and are only a few picked at random out of 50 to 75 already suggested. The inter-bureau Committee plans to concentrate on this problem as long as is necessary, to study all information now available in the various bureaus, to help prepare and pass factually on all material to be disseminated by the Office of Information and the Extension Service, and, perhaps, from time to time to suggest additional research studies in this field.

About all we have accomplished thus far is to help the Office of Information with its immediate plans. We assume that the task of this Committee from now on is to help formulate and carry out a long-time departmental policy on the back-to-pasture-and-forage movement.

So long as we proceed on sound lines, we feel that we will not only be pointing the way towards a desirable shift in our farming system, but if dairy, beef, and other control programs are subsequently launched by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the educational work already done by the Department ought to prove very helpful to that endeavor.

In completing my part of this brief report, I want to refer back to the Secretary's radio talk of last week. He touched upon what, in the Committee's opinion, is likely to be the turning point of this whole back-to-grass-and-forage movement.

The Secretary said:

"This matter of labor use and the number of people available to work on farms brings up one of the knotty social problems involved in the adjustment of agriculture. The unemployment situation has caused the children of most farmers to remain on the farm in recent years. Before the depression farm children in great numbers migrated to the city each year. But now that the majority stay on the farm - and many have returned to the farm after having had a try at finding

urban employment - the supply of labor available within the farm family is steadily growing. This labor must have employment, and to give it the operator of the farm needs either to enlarge his holding or cultivate more intensively what he now has. This situation will retard the return of crop land on many farms to pasture or forage production.

"But if the nation decides that returning land to pasture must be emphasized as a national policy, and it turns out to be against the immediate interests of the individual farmer, it is up to the nation to make it possible for the individual to take the step. That is the solution of the difficulty of the surplus adopted in the Adjustment Act with its system of benefit payments to bring prices closer to parity, and finance farmers through the period of balancing up our national agricultural plant.

"Indeed that system and those payments now make it possible for thousands of farmers to make the switch to pasture and roughage in larger proportions in their farming practice. If that switch seems generally desirable and if conditions of land tenure, taxation, or other legal or social situations seem to block it, the nation must deal with them."

